

Spring 2004

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*The Muir Woods Volunteer Newsletter*

# *The Redwood Log*

## Muirly Mia's Musings ...

*By Mia Monroe*

Winter-time is a full, productive season in the park and signs of celebration, restoration, and interpretation are everywhere!

The Winter Solstice event was very special this year and went so smoothly. The shadow puppet play was memorable, the luminaria breathtaking and special touches such as the Sempervirens Singers made the event quite memorable. Earth Day was a full one throughout the watershed, and so much was accomplished from planting to weeding, sprout trimming to trail work, demolition of the old weather station and old nursery (more park returned to the woods). Leaders came from stewardship programs throughout the park and ARAMARK was a great sponsor again. Special thanks to Don, Donna, Catherine, Joanne, Heather as well as LE rangers Pat, Terry, and Robert for offering the State Supreme Court Chief Justices a memorable experience in January.

In addition, there's that special "ed energy" in the park, thanks to the great interns and the "Into the Forest" ed program under Jim's leadership. Thanks to grants from Save -the-Redwoods League and NOAA we are able to greatly expand both the number of classes able to participate as well as the indispensable "free" buses to the schools. What a great field trip for those fortunate students!

More interpretive media continues to roll out. Look soon for trailhead kiosks, a few more waysides and the new watershed map/self-guided nature trail. And, have you looked at the new annual pass? Now in durable plastic with a classic image of John Muir, this pass now extends the same benefits to pass holders wishing to visit John Muir NHS: for the yearly fee of \$15, you and your group can have unlimited visits with no further charge to both sites!

SHHHHH! the spotted owl quiet period just started and in early March the "afterowlers," our park monitoring team, will be out to see how many SPOWs we have,

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## The VIP Corner ...

*By Heather Boothe*

It's spring in the world of volunteers! What's blooming around here is a new volunteer logo!

The new National Park Service Volunteers in Parks logo will have our redesigned arrowhead within a green circle. This meets two goals of the program: 1) to have the arrowhead updated to match our publications and NPS ranger uniforms, and 2) to be similar in appearance to other federal land management agencies. The Forest

Service, Bureau of Land Management and Fish and Wildlife Service Volunteer programs will also have logos with a circle around their agency emblem.



What does this mean for you? It means delay, for one. As I write this, neither new

"shields" for the nametags nor patches for shirts are available yet. But at the same time, we can't order the old ones, so the uniform supply is shrinking quickly. If you need replacement parts, let me know and I'll see what I can do. When the new uniform pieces do arrive, we will probably only replace the "old" ones as they are worn out. The uniform itself, (polo shirt etc.) will not change.

The UPDATE BINDER seems to be working well, as I see many of you flipping through it, and many people have asked me questions about training and special opportunities posted in there. If you haven't looked at it yet, you don't know what you're missing! If you hear of a lecture or program you think others would be interested in, put a copy of the information in the book to share!

As for the volunteer folders in the front hall ... we need to all get in the habit of checking them on each day you're here. I put a special surprise in there which many of you have yet to collect. It may often be empty, but if we take a message for you or need to leave you a note, it's the best way for us to make sure you get it!

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## From the World of Print

- By Heather Boothe

Aren't they here yet? After a wide variety of delays, by this summer all of our new wayside exhibits and trailhead signs will finally be installed. In order to help you get to know these new resources, there is now a "staff exhibit guide" binder on the bookshelf in the staff room and in the visitor center. You'll find photos and printouts of the exhibits, text, and some background information. As time permits, we'll also be adding more to the binder. One important thing that will be in there is a comment sheet for each exhibit. If you have comments on the exhibits – something really great, or something we have to be sure to change when we replace these someday, please write it down!

The new hiking and nature trail guide is scheduled to go on sale just as the Redwood Log goes to print. This new guide features a beautiful new map designed by the same folks who did our new trailhead kiosks. The layout of the nature trail is also changing, with all ten stops now on the east side of the creek from Bridge 2 to the far side of Cathedral Grove. Please note the new brochure is expected to sell for \$2.00. If you have comments, please let Mia, Heather, Alison, or Christopher know so we are ready for necessary changes before the next printing.

Our web site continues to grow in fits and starts. A temporary freeze on web page development, and a future freeze may slow us down further. In the meantime, we're working on adding a "Learning Place" section as well as many new flora and fauna pages. I need pictures! If you've got some good ones, either digital or print, that you'd like to share online, please send me a copy!

I need help! We have a wonderfully wide collection of brochures, but many need to be put into a newer format, and we'd like to put them on the web too. The formatting is pretty easy, but the time-consuming part is retyping all the text and finding photos. This simple act of retyping text into a Word file is a big first step. If you'd like to help out with this project, either while you're at Muir Woods or at home on your own computer, please talk to me! (Check out our new Correspondence brochure to see the new look!)



## Intern Matt

My path to Muir Woods was as circuitous as the road that leads down to the Monument, with plenty of switchbacks and occasional fears that I would fall off a precipice (an experience shared by anyone who is facing that road without guardrails for the first time.)

So, how did this not-so- young New Yorker end up here. Upon reflection, there is indeed a path that leads to that oft photographed entrance gate.

It is revealed in the journeys I have made in my adulthood. Without meaning to, it seems I've spent a considerable amount of time outdoors. From agricultural work in the deserts of Israel to research in a Guatemalan rainforest, I've chosen, in my travels, to spend my time outside. Even when home in New York City, I find myself working and playing in the out-of-doors. And yes, we have lots of trees in New York, including several patches of old growth forest in the Bronx!

But the path was not straight. I spent most of my career working as a freelance stagehand and stage manager. But at the beginning of the 1990's I felt it was time to experience something new. So I set off for travels in the Near East. As happens with many young adults who have experienced an extended time overseas, I was determined to find a more "meaningful" life. So, I set my sights on, what else, saving the world, and I thought the best place to save the world was in the Third World. So, I entered and received a Masters in Sustainable International Development.

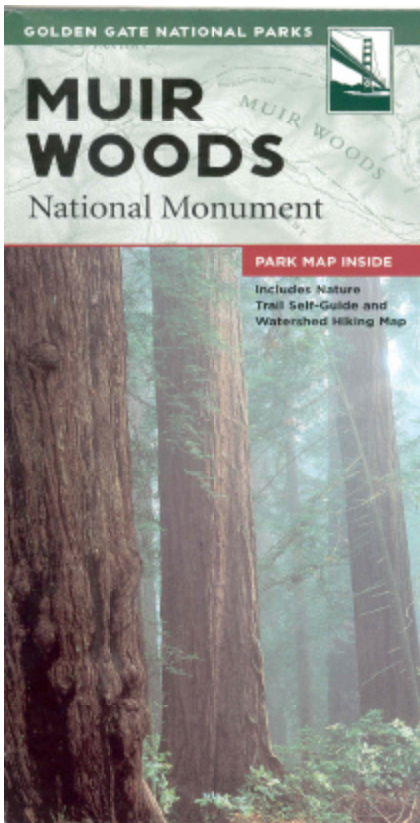
But, things change, and life progresses, and one wonders if there aren't things to do at home. So, I have spent the last several years volunteering as a community mediator in Staten Island, and learning more about how we humans can coexist in a sustainable manner, with our natural world. This summer, I worked for the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation as an educator. That experience, and all that preceded it, led me to Muir Woods. I hope the wonderful experience I am gaining here will enable me to work as a Park Ranger in some equally beautiful place when this internship is over. That path, however, I've yet to begin.

## Parks Conservancy News

*by Alison Campbell*

**Staffing update...**We are currently recruiting for our summer season. Look for some new faces soon!

**New annual pass...**We are pleased to announce the arrival of a new annual pass which works at both Muir Woods National Monument and John Muir National Historic Site.



### **New titles...**

**Golden Gate National Recreation Area:** Hal Rothman's The New Urban Park: Golden Gate National Recreation Area and Civic Environmentalism provides a history of the park and its context within the urban national park movement. The Guide to the Parks is on sale at \$1.99 (originally \$9.95) while supplies last. A new improved edition is due soon.

**Muir Woods trail guide:** By the time you read this, we

will probably be selling a new improved version of the Muir Woods trail guide.

**Note Cards:** We have beautiful new note cards depicting fetid adder's tongues, woodland wildflowers, northwest conifers, and Mill Valley lichens.

Park volunteers and Parks Conservancy members receive a 15% discount on all visitor center purchases. Proceeds benefit the park.

## Nuts and Bolts

*Compiled by Elaina Marie Ashe*

The crew activity update:

Tima will be taking his annual trip to Arizona for the baseball spring training. This supervisor deserves this break after the immense work load that the preplanning for competitive review has created for GGNRA's Maintenance Divisions.

Maintenance participation on Earth Day was led in backbone support by Kent Carpenter and Volunteer Andrew Thomson's continuous preparation, assistance, trucking, loading, offloading and overall ground support to any of the groups. Mike O'Bryant lead the Tourist Club crew on another section of fencing, Jeff and the Chevron retirees worked on removal of the overgrowth on the Redwood tree project that hosts the first station for the wayside exhibits. And many special thanks to Erika Swinney, our former Nursery and Americorp intern who led the Home Depot crew on the deconstruction of the old nursery behind the loft.

Jeffrey has been accepted into the Maintenance Division mentorship program. Elaina Marie Ashe continues in her Environmental Intake Program under the tutelage of Tony di Stefano, the parks EPA specialist. Mojave Dessert is her next Environmental Audit. Mike and Kent continue to do a great job of managing the weekend volunteers and keeping the Boardwalks and Bridges well flossed.

Spotted Owl nesting season has arrived so SHHHHHHHHHHHH. No power tools for a while.

### ***Special Volunteer Opportunities!!***

We need extra help for upcoming special events. Can you help? Some options ... International Migratory Bird Month (May 8), Summer Solstice (June 21), ranger-led hikes ...



## **Nursery News —**

*By Haley Ross, Nursery intern*

Redwood Creek has certainly been the center of attention in these winter months as visitors have been strolling the creek-side trails through Muir woods, seeking a glimpse of a Coho Salmon. Now that the peak of spawning activity has passed, the excitement has dwindled a bit, but Redwood Creek is still all we think about here at the nursery. Here's an update on the restoration project down at Lower Redwood Creek (also known as Banducci).

It's planting season! With the erosion control measures in place all along the creek, we were ready for the December rain and ready to start planting. Since mid-December, over 350 volunteer hours have been dedicated to transporting plants to the site, putting the plants in the ground with the greatest of care, and building and installing deer guards to protect the young plants. The nursery volunteers and staff have planted about 5,000 plants, so we're well on our way to our grand planned total of about 6,000. We expect to be done with re-vegetation by mid-March.

We began our planting along the outer edge of the riparian corridor, furthest from the creek, in an effort to "claim the edges" of our planting site and create a buffer between the field of non-native grasses that borders the site. California blackberry, dogwood, coffee berry, twinberry, bee plant and cow parsnip were among the plant species planted in the edge area. We then moved in towards the creek. Currently, we are working on planting bank side vegetation, including thimbleberry, elderberry, sword fern, fringe cups, hedge nettle and arroyo willows. Other important components of the restored riparian corridor that we've planted are trees: red alder, buckeyes, coast live oak and big-leaf maple. Later in the season we'll plant native grasses throughout the site.

So, once the plants are in the ground, we're done, right? Not so fast! The next task is taking care of the competition. We'll be putting in a lot of time in the coming months pulling out exotics so that our little natives have the best chance we can give them of surviving. And creating a healthy riparian habitat for songbirds, Coho and nature lovers!

If you haven't been to Banducci lately, come check out the progress, but be careful where you step! Also, take a look into the creek where the large woody debris structures were installed. They're doing their jobs beautifully; around each 'weir' structure is a pool, some about ten feet deep, which will provide great habitat for juvenile salmon this coming summer.

*(Mia's Musings, Continued from page 1)*

where they are nesting and whether "Darth Owl", the barred owl, is still here!

Meanwhile, all park activities are conducted as quietly as possible and "noisy noise" can only be undertaken if it is an emergency. Other cool nature notes: a great year for vermilion waxy cap mushrooms, also a great year for fetid adders-tongue! Look for trillium, houndstongue, rainbells and oxalis. Another remarkable phenomenon this year was the great salmon runs: abundant in numbers, robust fish and well-distributed throughout our system over the season!!!!

We continue to face staffing shortages and budget shortfalls but are able to continue to offer quality visitor service thanks to the committed staff...yes, YOU!

Thank you!



The New Muir Woods Annual Pass

*(VIP Corner, Continued from page 1)*

Upcoming training opportunities ... Interpretive Skills training, Tuesday through Friday, June 8-11 ... Firefighter extinguisher training, Thursday, June 17, time TBA (one hour) ... Incident response training, week of June 13, time TBA ... a possible one-day field trip to state redwood parks, if there's any interest let Heather know .. And check out the update binder for late-breaking opportunities!

## Intern Chris

Chris grew up in the town of Orangevale, between Tahoe and Sacramento in Northern California. As an avid outdoorsman, he loves to spend his time fishing, hiking, snowboarding, and surfing. When he finds himself trapped indoors, he bides his time by painting and playing guitar. He is currently living in the intern dorms at the Marin Headlands, where he is taking advantage of having one of the area's best surf breaks at his front door, not to mention the hiking opportunities in the Headlands

Chris has two brothers, a twin that teaches English in Japan, and a younger brother who is a freshman at Chico State. His parents have lived in the same house for the last 25 years and are avid gardeners. He has a girlfriend who lives in Millbrae (the peninsula), and has been with her for the last year and a half.

Chris will receive his Bachelor of Science degree in Recreation and Leisure Studies with a concentration in Parks Management, from California State University Sacramento in May. He looks forward to using his background with children and his love of the natural world while completing his duties as an education intern.



## Intern Cliff

I feel fortunate to be part of such a wonderful community of dedicated individuals. We all support one another and with such integrity that I feel stronger knowing that such great work is going on all around me.

I want to take this opportunity to introduce myself to those who I haven't met and give a little background on what has brought me to work here at Muir Woods.

My interpretive career began as a volunteer at the Hayward Shoreline Interpretive Center in the midst of my high school education. I postponed my academics after high school to learn new and diverse technical knowledge, applied it through a variety of occupations, performed well, and could easily have excelled in these fields. However, they did not inspire my creative interests and desire to teach.

Mentoring Environmental Education filled that void and guided me to redirect my energy back to people instead of machines. I had begun my journey in Environmental Education/Interpretation at the shoreline, discovered, sampled, and wandered through a few jobs outside the field, eventually to realize that I had known my direction from the beginning. My choices have left me with a great resume but behind my peers academically. This has allowed me to set tangible and focused objectives based on my experience, at a practical time in my life..

This internship will help me grow professionally as I foster better communication between Muir Woods and the Headlands Institute. I am excited to be a part of our Muir Woods team as we preserve our natural and cultural history for generations.

Thank you.



### ***Release Your Inner Typist!!***

Heather needs help retyping all of our brochure text for use on web pages and brochure reformatting projects. (See Media article). Talk to heather if you can help!

